Traumatic Events and Crisis – Preparing and Responding

RESOURCES FOR MINISTERS, TEACHERS, AND PARENTS

In Times of Pain and Crisis – A Downloadable Pamphlet for Teachers and Parents from Discipleship Ministries

Preparing for Traumatic Events in the Lives of Children – How do we approach the needs of children in the midst of and following crisis? Webinar from Discipleship Ministries

Fred Rogers on Scary News – Video and Information from PBS

Helping Children Cope with Frightening News – What parents can do to aid scared kids in processing grief and fear in a healthy way from Child Mind Institute

Helping Children Cope – Changes in Behavior from The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Sesame Street Hurricane Episode – Video from The Sesame Workshop

Age Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event from The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Childcare and Weekday Preschool Disaster Resources from NAEYC

Water Bugs & Dragonflies: Explaining Death to Young Children by Doris Stickney

RespondingToChildrenInTroublingTimes_2016 - Slides for use on church screens from Discipleship Ministries

Offering Comfort to Children in Troubling Times – A video with Leanne Hadley and Melanie C. Gordon from Discipleship Ministries

The Psalmist Says... “Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, until the destroying storms pass by.”
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**Books for Children**

*Feelings* by Aliki
Helps children to identify and explain their feelings

*Flash, Crash, Rumble, and Roll* by Franklyn M. Branley
Reassuring information on thunderstorms; especially good for a small group

*Fire! Fire!* by Gail Gibbons
Well-illustrated text includes fighting an apartment fire and a wildfire

*Children Just Like Me* by Anabel and Barnabas Kindersley
Helps children to build a picture of the lives of other children and their families throughout the world

*Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children* by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen.
Explains life cycles of people, plants and animals

*To Everything* by Bob Barner
Changes that bring both joy and sorrow are part of life. Includes discussion questions and activities guide

*Jim’s Dog Muffins* by Miriam Cohen and illustrated by Ronald Himler
Jim’s friend helps him both laugh and cry in remembering his dog

*Bedtime for Frances* by Russell Hoban and illustrated by Garth Williams
Reflects specific fears of children at bedtime

*Mama Do You Love Me?* by Barbara M. Joosse and illustrated by Barbara Lavalle
An Inuit mother reassures her child that love does not diminish in difficult times

*Abiyoyo* by Pete Seeger and illustrated by Michael Hays
Fighting a monster through music encourages children to explore feelings through pretend play

*Humphrey’s Bear* by Jan Wahl and illustrated by William Joyce
A comforting story emphasizing the need for a familiar object, a toy bear, at bedtime

*The Tin Forest* by Helen Ward and illustrated by Wayne Anderson
An old man’s dreams transform a wasteland into a living forest in an empowering message of hope

*Hurricane* by David Wiesner
After a hurricane, a fallen tree becomes a place of magical adventure, encouraging children to tell about loss and damage to their homes

*The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything* by Linda Williams
An interactive and rhythmic tale about feeling scared - excellent for group time story

Books and Bibles for Children – list from Discipleship Ministries

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Basics for Supporting Children and Families

Through our baptism, we promise to surround our children “with a community of love and forgiveness.” We are that community. So, together we…

Support one another in Ministry with Children: https://youtu.be/iJ_xayJFS7A Melanie C. Gordon and Leanne Hadley share ways to bring comfort to children in troubling times.

Pray with children for the victims. Simple prayers like: Dear God, help and bless the people who were harmed. Guard them all with your care. Amen.

Discuss openly with children what your family and congregation are doing to help those who have been hurt and are still hurting.

Limit exposure to continuing news stories and hold adult conversations only when children are not present. This will limit trauma by protecting children from ongoing media images that may only contribute to fear and helplessness.

Reassure children as you listen to their fears. Children experience the same feelings as adults, so it is important and reasonable to validate their feelings while keeping a positive outlook on the future.

Share your own feelings with children. Fear is a part of the human condition, and it is appropriate to affirm feelings of fear. There are also books that are appropriate for helping children cope with what they are feeling. A list is below.

Contact organizations in your area that address the needs of children. Following traumatic events, these organizations are ready to answer your questions and respond to your concerns.

Provide structure through routine and activity. Routines and activities help regain a sense of control and security when so much feels out of control.

Make objects that encourage play reenactment of the images children observe during and after a traumatic experience. Children learn through play, and often use actions rather than words to express their fears or anxieties.

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Encourage children to draw or write whatever comes to their minds, or give them a question or topic to draw about. Create a group mural or collage that illustrates the images children have seen. Follow up by listening to what they may have to say about how they are feeling.

Do good. Doing good for others helps children overcome the sense of powerlessness. There are many ways to be helpful in your community and around the world like UMCOR http://www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Relief-Supplies

Ongoing communication is helpful for validating children’s feelings about the images they see or the conversations they hear about traumatic events. Most importantly, end each conversation on a positive note by assuring children of God’s love. Use scripture, like “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” or “God is a safe place to hide, ready to help when we need him,” from different translations. Psalm 46 is one example of scripture that can bring children comfort.

Use slides for use on church screens to help congregations understand RespondingToChildrenInTroublingTimes_2016

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